

CALFED OPERATIONS COORDINATION GROUP

MEETING NOTES AND ACTION ITEMS

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

March 30, 2005

Handouts

CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing Package, dated March 30, 2005; Tracy Pettit, DWR.

Draft VAMP Daily Operation Plan, dated March 25, 2005; Lowell Ploss, SJRG.

EWA and B2 Accounting presentation materials, dated March 30, 2005; Tracy Pettit, DWR.

Announcements

The USBR announced that Chet Bowling will be retiring next month. Ron Milligan will be assuming Chet's responsibilities.

SWRCB Activities

The D-1641 periodic review workshops are over, and Board staff is reviewing the information that was presented. The comment period will close on Friday, May 20th. Staff intends to make recommendations to the Board in September, and expects to finish the whole D-1641 review process by the end of the calendar year. SWRCB staff is still working to post the large volume of submittals from the hearings onto their website.

The Board has received DWR and USBR's letter declaring that at this time, they are *not* requesting reconsideration of the temporary urgency change for the 0.7 EC standard starting April 1, 2005. The agencies will notify the Board if they anticipate a problem with meeting the standard later in the summer.

Gita Kapahi also announced a Yuba short-term transfer of up to 125 TAF. The comment period closes April 25.

On-Going Activities Related to the Ops Group

Joint Point of Diversion

DWR and USBR continue to develop the Water Quality Response Plan and the Water Level Response Plan. A final WQRP must be submitted to the Board by April 25, and two reports are due to the Board for the WLRP, in June and August. A draft of the Fishery Protection Plan is being reviewed by the fishery agencies prior to submittal to the Board in early April. (The goal is to make this FPP a long-term plan.)

Ron Milligan (USBR) asked Gita about the timing for a special one-day workshop on flexing the X2 standard per WOMT. Most likely, this would be held after the comment period for the workshops closes.

Vernalis Flow Objective

This year's hydrology on the San Joaquin is wet, with high flows on the Tuolumne and the Merced rivers. (However, New Melones is not close to encroaching into the flood control pool.) The USBR may withdraw their urgency petition regarding the Vernalis flow objective.

VAMP

Lowell Ploss distributed a draft VAMP Daily Operation Plan dated March 25, 2005, but the information was already considered "out of date" since flows of 2,000 cfs, 5,000 cfs, and 9,000 cfs are now expected on the Merced, on the Tuolumne, and on the San Joaquin at Vernalis, respectively, through the end of May. These estimates do not include Stanislaus River flows. Also, the San Joaquin tributary operators may have significant releases on the Merced and Tuolumne rivers into June. For flows greater than 5,000-5,500 cfs at Vernalis, the Head of Old River Barrier will not be installed.

At the March 23rd technical meeting, the group decided that the best opportunity would be to use stable flows, and the best chance of having stable flows for the 31-day period would be after May 1. The level of export curtailments has not been determined, but the technical group is currently recommending 1,500 cfs combined. Kodiak trawls will be conducted at Mossdale and Old River to obtain fish-split data, and new gaging stations will also enable collection of flow split data.

The USBR must consult with the fisheries agencies and with DWR, then submit a VAMP plan to the Executive Director of the SWRCB before the beginning of VAMP. Due to the need for an official decision on whether to postpone VAMP from April 15 to May 1 prior to the next regularly scheduled CalFed Ops meeting, a special CalFed Ops meeting was scheduled for April 14 at 1:00 pm.

Fishery Status

It was announced that NOAA Fisheries is proposing to list the green sturgeon.

Chinook

Winter-run juveniles are on the move at the facilities, but take is well within allowable levels. (The total is less than 4,000; the 1% level of concern is 8,817.) Same pattern for spring-run--the January surrogates loss was creeping up to the limit, but has reached a plateau.

Steelhead

Salvage levels are low, well within the take limit. (New incidental take limit is 3,000 juveniles and adults.

Delta Smelt

Completed Kodiak trawl survey #3 last week, and they were all in the lower Sacramento River and downstream. One-half the females were spent. (There was no catch in the lower San Joaquin River.)

Also, the 20mm survey continues, and catch is really low. (A pilot survey is also performed at the same time as the 20 mm survey to catch smelt that are smaller than 20 mm.)

Splittail

No issues were reported.

Work Group Activities

DAT Update

Discussed above in Fisheries Status and VAMP.

OFF Update

Richard Denton (CCWD) requested to have the correspondence between the SWRCB, DWR, and USBR be posted on the CalFed Ops website.

WOMT Update

Discussed above in VAMP.

Operations Status

The CALFED Ops Group Operations Briefing package was discussed. John Leahigh expects a boost in the April 1 forecast. Therefore, he anticipates increases in allocations (currently at 60%).

Presentation

Peggy Manza (USBR) and Tracy Pettit (DWR) presented Water Year 2005 B2 and EWA accounting.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

There will be a presentation on Snow Surveys and Forecasting at the next regular CalFed Ops meeting on April 27, 2005.

A special CalFed Ops meeting is scheduled for 1:00 on April 14, 2005, to discuss VAMP and pre-VAMP actions. The location will be determined.